IN THE SPECIFICATION

Please amend the specification by inserting before the first line the sentence --This is a continuation of U.S. Application No. 09/093,291, filed on June 8, 1998, now pending.--

IN THE CLAIMS

See Amend A

Please cancel claims 1, 5-11, 15-22, 28-51.

Please add the following new claims:

48. A method for removing a noble metal residue comprising iridium, from a microelectronic device structure disposed in a chamber, the method comprising contacting the microelectronic device structure with a cleaning gas comprising gas-phase XeF_2, wherein the gas phase XeF_2 is continually flowed through the chamber in combination with an energetic dissociation source selected from the group consisting of a plasma source, an ion source, an ultra violet source and a laser source, to at least partially remove the noble metal residue.

49. A method for removing a noble metal residue comprising iridium, from a microelectronic device structure disposed in a chamber, wherein elemental silicon is present, the method comprising evacuating the chamber, filling the chamber with a cleaning gas comprising XeF_2, and retaining the cleaning gas in the chamber to react with the residue, to effect the removal of the noble metal residue from the microelectronic device structure.

50. A method for removing a noble metal residue comprising iridium, from a microelectronic device structure disposed in a chamber, the method comprising

evacuating the chamber, filling the chamber with a cleaning gas comprising XeF_2 and one or more radicals selected from the group consisting of SiF_2 and SiF_3, and retaining the cleaning gas in the chamber to react with the residue, to effect the removal of the noble metal residue from the microelectronic device structure.

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51. A method for removing from a microelectronic device structure a noble metal residue including at least one metal selected from the group consisting of platinum, palladium, iridium and rhodium, the method comprising contacting the microelectronic device structure with a gas-phase reactive halide composition comprising SiF_4, to remove the residue.

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52. A method for removing from a microelectronic device structure a noble metal residue including at least one metal selected from the group consisting of platinum, palladium, iridium and rhodium, the method comprising contacting the microelectronic device structure with a gas-phase reactive halide composition comprising Si_2F_6, to remove the residue.

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53. A method for removing from a microelectronic device structure a noble metal residue including at least one metal selected from the group consisting of platinum, palladium, iridium and rhodium, the method comprising contacting the microelectronic device structure with a gas-phase reactive halide composition:

(a) comprising a halide component selected from the group consisting of SF_6, SiF_4, Si_2F_6, SiF_2 radical, SiF_3 radical, and XeF_2, in an amount effective to a least partially remove the residue; and